

# OKLAHOMA 4-H

## RULES & GUIDELINES

September 1, 2017-August 31, 2018

### The Vision

Oklahoma 4-H will be recognized as a national leader in developing youths' abilities to become productive citizens and catalysts for positive change to meet the needs of a diverse and changing society.

### The Mission

4-H, the youth development program of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, provides opportunities for all youth to reach their fullest potential by developing and enhancing skills for living.

### The 4-H Pledge

I pledge:

My head to clearer thinking,  
my heart to greater loyalty,  
my hands to larger service,  
and my health to better living  
for my club, my community,  
my country, and my world.

### The 4-H Motto

"To make the best better."

### The 4-H Emblem

A green four-leaf clover with the letter H on each leaflet representing the Head, Heart, Hands and Health.

### The 4-H Colors

Green represents nature's most common color and represents youth, life and growth. White represents purity and high ideals

**Welcome to 4-H!** The Oklahoma 4-H program is full of opportunities for a family to work, play and learn together. This publication will help families understand the general rules and guidelines that govern Oklahoma 4-H membership and participation. We encourage families to review the document so they know what to expect as a child participates in 4-H events and activities. Please direct questions regarding 4-H rules and guidelines to your county Extension office.

**Membership rules and guidelines**, stated in this publication, will be followed at all levels of the Oklahoma 4-H Program. The Oklahoma State 4-H office will have final ruling on any interpretation or discrepancy resulting from any 4-H membership rules and guidelines, 4-H managed contest/activities/events eligibility or enrollment issue within the state of Oklahoma.

### Program Specific Rules and Guidelines

Each 4-H program, activity or event may have its own unique rules and guidelines. Care will be taken to avoid rules that exclude youth for reasons they cannot control. Cooperation among Extension staff, volunteers, parents and sponsors is essential to solving specific problems that may arise. **It is the family's responsibility to obtain rules and guidelines for any program/activity/event in which they choose to participate.**

### Parental Involvement

Families are important and enhance the 4-H experience. Parents are encouraged to attend meetings with their child(ren) and support the 4-H club, project or activity leader(s) and staff as requested. Parents who are disruptive at meetings, verbally abusive to members or other adults, or who exhibit threatening behaviors will be subject to exclusion from the 4-H program. If a parent's negative behavior persists, membership status may be withdrawn from their child.



OKLAHOMA COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION SERVICE

4-H Youth  
Development

## **4-H Enrollment Guidelines:**

### **Members must reside or attend school in Oklahoma.**

**Grade for Enrollment:** 4-H age will be determined by the youth's public school grade as of September 1 each year.

A child's "grade division" will not change until re-enrollment on September 1.

Youth may enroll in 4-H on September 1 if they are 8 **AND** in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. If they turn 8 after September 1 and are in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, they will not be eligible to enroll in 4-H until the next 4-H year but they may participate as a Cloverbud. 4-H membership ends on August 31 following the completion of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade or having reached the age of 19 on or before September 1, **whichever comes first**. Graduated high school seniors may complete their 4-H career by exhibiting in the fall fairs (see pages 4 and 5 for additional information).

Cloverbud Enrollment – see page 3

**Parental/Guardian Authorization:** Oklahoma 4-H must comply with Oklahoma State University's Minors on Campus policy. The enrollment process requires that a legal parent or guardian accept or decline required authorizations and sign the enrollment. It is illegal for anyone other than the legal parent or guardian to complete an enrollment for a minor child.

### **4-H membership may only be held in one county.**

- A member/family may complete a "Petition for Membership" form to request 4-H affiliation in a county other than where they live or go to school—public, home, private, charter, online, etc. The petition must be mutually approved by Extension staff in EACH county involved. The signed agreement will be kept on file in each Extension office.
- In some events affiliated with 4-H, but not managed by 4-H, such as county fairs and livestock shows, exhibitors may be required to be residents and/or students in the county where competing. It is the family's responsibility to check with the governing body for specific guidelines.
- If a county does not offer a particular project, a youth may cross county lines to participate in educational programs in a project area but may not join that county's competitive teams. However, he/she may compete representing his/her home county.

- When a 4-H member moves, youth will:
  1. Request a transfer of membership from one county to another within the state of Oklahoma or
  2. Enroll in Oklahoma 4-H when transferring from another state.

At the time enrollment is filed in the new county, all membership rights in the former county/state are surrendered. Oklahoma 4-H membership transfers without an additional program fee. If the program fee has not been paid for the current program year, it must be paid to the new county at the time of the transfer. If "length" of membership is required for participation in a specific activity in the new county, membership time in the former county is considered when the new/transfer of enrollment is completed in a timely fashion.

- When a 4-H member's parents live in separate counties, the youth must declare membership in one county and the family must notify the Extension office in both counties where custody and residency is shared. Even when custody is jointly shared, youth may not exhibit or compete in 4-H activities in two counties. The youth's parents' court decree governs determination of the custodial parent. If this is not present, the person who claimed the child on his/her federal and state income tax the previous year generally is considered to be the custodial parent.

**Annual Enrollment:** The 4-H year in Oklahoma begins September 1 and ends August 31 of the following year. All enrollment becomes "inactive" September 1 each year, no matter the date enrolled. The 4HOnline data management system will annually close for maintenance and updates August 15-31 and no new enrollment will be accepted during this time.

**4-H Program Insurance:** Only youth who have submitted enrollment (electronically or on the paper enrollment form) will be covered by 4-H program insurance.

**Active Enrollment Status:** An individual who

- Meets the grade requirement.
- Completed the 4-H enrollment process (through 4HOnline enrollment system or submitted paper enrollment) and
- Has paid the 4-H program fee and is considered “active.”

The program fee can be paid a) Online by credit/debit card; b) Cash/check/money order to the county Extension office; c) 4-H club or another organization; or d) Requesting financial assistance through the Extension office

**Members-at-Large:** Members are expected to participate in local 4-H clubs. If a club is not available in your area or if the club’s meeting time creates an unusual hardship, families should work with their county Extension staff to establish a new chartered 4-H club.

**Loss of Membership:** Membership in 4-H is a privilege and may be denied to or withdrawn from persons who have exhibited any of the following behavior(s):

- Convicted of a crime.
- Banned from school or school-related programs or another organization.
- Violated the 4-H Code of Conduct.
- Exhibited behavior that may discredit the image of the 4-H program.
- Placed another individual or animal at undue risk.
- Violated published rules or guidelines governing the 4-H affiliated events or activities.

**Enrollment for Livestock Shows:** Livestock shows at local, county, district, state and regional levels all establish their own rules. It is the family’s responsibility to obtain and comply with said rules. The 4-H program’s role is to verify date of enrollment or enrollment status. The show’s governing board determines eligibility.

## **4-H Teen Volunteer Enrollment and Certification**

Serving as a certified teen volunteer with the Oklahoma 4-H program is a privilege. Teens who have the potential of working with youth unsupervised as a project leader, teen leader, camp counselor, district/state officers, etc., must complete the same certification process and requirements as an adult.

## **4-H Adult Volunteer Enrollment and Certification**

Serving as a volunteer with the Oklahoma 4-H Program is a privilege. Volunteers serve at the pleasure of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service and Oklahoma State University. A breach in the Volunteer Behavioral Guidelines or any other established rules/guidelines is grounds for immediate dismissal as a 4-H volunteer.

**Active Enrollment Status:** An individual who

- Meets the age requirement (21+).
- Upon their initial enrollment as a volunteer, completes the volunteer application process, which includes screening and approval.
- Annually completes the 4-H enrollment process through 4HOnline enrollment system.
- Annually complete the required continuing education, including Working With Minors and Title VII and IX training.
- On a regular interval, all volunteers will be re-screened.

**4-H Program Insurance:** Only certified volunteers who have submitted enrollment will be covered by 4-H program insurance.

## **4-H Cloverbud Program and Guidelines**

The Cloverbud program is family-oriented and noncompetitive. Due to the developmental skills of this age group, Cloverbud members will not be permitted to participate in events where they or their projects are compared or judged against their peers.

Cloverbud members may only participate in noncompetitive activities on a local or county basis as deemed appropriate by the OSU Extension Staff and Parent-Volunteer Association/Council. District and state activities will not be provided for Cloverbuds.

- Cloverbud membership will be granted to children 5 years old through the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Enrollment can be done online if the child is 5 on or before September 1.
- Cloverbud members must annually complete the 4-H enrollment process (through the 4HOnline enrollment system or submitted paper enrollment), which includes paying the 4-H program fee. The program fee can be paid a) Online by credit/debit card; b) Cash/check/money order to the county Extension office; c) 4-H club or another organization; or d) Requesting financial assistance through the Extension office.

- Only youth who have submitted enrollment (electronically or on the paper enrollment form) will be covered by 4-H program insurance.
- 4-H program fee must be paid before enrollment status is considered “active.”
- Fundraising by Cloverbuds is not permitted.
- If a Cloverbud turns 8 after September 1 **AND** is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, they will be a Cloverbud until the next 4-H year – see page 2

## **Program Fee**

A 4-H Program Fee was implemented September 1, 2016.

- The cost is \$20 per year and applies to all 4-H youth enrollment (Cloverbuds and 4-H members).
- If a youth is enrolled between September 1 and August 31 of the 4-H year, the full \$20 fee will be collected. There will be no pro-rated fee based on enrollment date.
- The payment must be remitted to the county Extension Office within 30 days of enrollment or the enrollment will be rolled back to inactive or new enrollment will be deleted.
- The 4-H Program Fee is based on an individual’s membership, not by club. Members are required to submit only one program fee annually through their primary 4-H Club.
- Families with three or more children will pay a maximum of \$60 in 4-H program fees. The definition of family is identified as children living at the same address.
- No child will be denied the opportunity to enroll in 4-H due to the inability to pay. Be it understood, the enrollment process is not complete (which means “active”) until the fee is paid. Contact the county Extension office about local scholarships or opportunities for satisfying the program fee requirement. Scholarship application posted at: **[4h.okstate.edu/about4-h/what-is-4-h/join-oklahoma-4-h](http://4h.okstate.edu/about4-h/what-is-4-h/join-oklahoma-4-h)**

## **4-H Participation and Competition**

### **4-H Project Work and Exhibits:**

Why youth enroll in a project? The 4-H project (entomology, photography, food science, etc.) is the gateway to the 4-H member. Through project work, members “Learn by Doing.” The 4-H project is a tool for helping youth develop into more capable adults by teaching them how to set goals, make decisions, follow through with commitments, do evaluations and report their work. Enroll in the number of projects the member will have time to plan and carry out. Choose a project(s) that meets the family situation and lifestyle.

Project work/exhibit(s) is the effort of the 4-H member. Exhibits are the result of the child applying their mastery of knowledge and skills for a “project.” Projects/exhibits are to be completed during the current enrollment year.

**Fall Fairs** are intended as the culmination or end of the previous 4-H year’s project work. Exhibits represent work completed by the member sometime during their previous 12 months of enrollment. A 4-H member’s enrollment status must have been “active” the previous year to exhibit in the fall fairs.

### **Livestock Exhibits**

An animal nomination form does not constitute 4-H enrollment. Enrollment must be completed through 4HOnline enrollment system or paper enrollment signed and submitted to the Extension office and 4-H program fee paid to be considered an “active” enrolled 4-H member.

To show livestock (beef, horse, sheep, swine, goats, poultry, rabbits, etc.) in the fall at the state fairs, members must have had an “active” enrollment status during the previous program year by the date published by the show’s governing board.

To show in the spring, youth must have an “active enrollment status” by the date published by the show’s governing board.

*\*\* Be aware of each individual show’s eligibility rules. Each governing board determines eligibility.*

### **School Absences**

When it is necessary for a 4-H member to miss school to attend a 4-H event, the member and his/her family should work with local school officials regarding his/her absenteeism. Local schools have guidelines regarding

attendance polices for activities which qualify for excused absence. Families are responsible for talking to teachers and school administrators about these issues in advance of events and activities requiring an excused absence.

**Grade Divisions**

The table below is a guide for grade-age divisions. Some events/activities at the county, district, state and national level may use different grade divisions. Event-specific grade divisions will supersede those noted below. A child’s “grade division” will not change until re-enrollment on September 1.

Grade division exceptions might include a) A county chooses to include 7th graders in the senior division; b) Grade requirements for elected office; or c) A grade requirement for attending a conference/participating in an event.

	Junior	Intermediate	Senior
Grade	3 <sup>rd</sup> (and 8 years old), 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup> , 10 <sup>th</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup> , 12 <sup>th</sup>
	Junior 3-7 Grades		Senior 8-12 Grades

**Enrollment Requirements for Participation**

To compete in contests beyond the county, youth must have been enrolled for 30 days prior to the event. Some events may have additional age/grade classification as well as enrollment requirements. The family is responsible for obtaining the rules and guidelines, from the sponsoring body, of any event they choose to participate.

**Graduated Seniors**

Immediately following high school graduation, graduating seniors may:

- Continue to exhibit their projects through the fall state fairs (seniors are responsible for referencing fair guidelines to confirm eligibility).
- Participate in a national 4-H competitive event and/or trip, if qualified or awarded during active membership and are otherwise eligible to participate according to the rules and regulations of the national 4-H trip/event.
- Fulfill their role as a State 4-H Council member when elected during Roundup.

- **The 2017-18 program year will be a transition year with the change from age to grade in program activities, events, contests and awards. As of September 1, 2018, grade will be the determining factor for activities/events/contests/awards.**

**Youth Representing Oklahoma at National 4-H Contests**

Youth who have represented 4-H or another youth organization at an event that serves as the national 4-H contest, or its equivalent, are ineligible to return to that contest as a representative of Oklahoma 4-H. Participation in equivalent out-of-state contests will be handled on an individual basis. The Oklahoma State 4-H office will have final ruling on contest eligibility.

Youth enrolled in 4-H who have participated at a national contest may still be eligible to participate and compete in state level contests (See individual contest rules).

**General 4-H Participation**

1. All events and activities planned, conducted or sponsored by the Cooperative Extension Service are open to all youth who meet 4-H membership criteria. Events not planned, conducted or sponsored by 4-H may limit participation to youth who meet additional criteria. If those criteria are discriminating in nature, that group may be denied the use of the 4-H name and emblem in conjunction with the event, even if the event is open to 4-H members.
2. Youth participating as 4-H members in approved activities or events sponsored by other organizations have the responsibility to abide by the regulations and guidelines of the sponsoring organization.
3. The Oklahoma 4-H Youth Development Program encourages members to maintain good academic standing at school. Local school districts are expected to inform students and families of the student’s eligibility status. If a family knowingly violates the school’s policy regarding eligibility, 4-H will support the school in any actions taken.
4. Guidelines for 4-H sponsored events and activities will be available prior to the event. Families, volunteers, parents and members are responsible for checking with the Extension office for county and district information or visiting the Oklahoma 4-H website for state coordinated activities: ***4h.okstate.edu/events-and-activities***

### **Oklahoma 4-H Open Membership Guidelines**

Oklahoma 4-H supports membership in other youth-serving organizations. We do not support the policies of organizations who do not allow dual membership in 4-H or any other group or organization.

Since October 1, 1993, there has been no official dual membership agreement between Oklahoma FFA Chapters and the Oklahoma 4-H Youth Development Program. The following rationale and guidelines should be followed in advising 4-H members about membership in 4-H and all other youth organizations.

#### **Rationale for Open Membership**

1. Young people and adults are unique, each with their own interests and talents. Different organizations have their own unique and varied strengths and program offerings.
2. Cooperation and collaboration between youth organizations should result in each child meeting his/her specific needs by utilizing the programs and leadership provided by various youth organizations.
3. Young people who participate in more than one organization have opportunities to capitalize on the specific strengths of each organization to reach his/her own full potential as an individual.
4. As skills are learned through participation in various community organizations, those skills will be applied to the individual's work within each and every organization, thus improving the potential of all community organizations.
5. If organizations are not competing for the exclusive loyalty of an individual, all organizations can work together to provide better support for the youth of the community.
6. Questions regarding dual membership should first be addressed cooperatively through the educators and administrators involved.

### **Guidelines for Open Membership**

The following practices will guide implementation of the open membership rule by Extension staff and volunteers.

- 4-H membership is open to all youth. Members of other organizations are welcome to be actively involved in 4-H.
- When specific activities for more than one organization are held at the same time (as in some judging contests) members will be expected to indicate their preference for organizational representation prior to the development of a team roster so that other individuals may be included on the team.
- When specific community activities create competition for an individual's time or loyalty, the organizations involved should establish a spirit of mutual cooperation and fairness and work out a local agreement prior to the beginning of training, workout or preparation for an event or contest.
- Some regional and national competitive events prohibit youth from participating more than one time, regardless of the organization.
- If a young person is declared ineligible to participate in other youth development organizations due to unethical behaviors, he/she will not be permitted to participate in 4-H. Likewise, if his/her local chapter or organization is placed on probation by a fair or show, he/she will not be eligible to transfer membership to 4-H in order to avoid the probation.
- Dual projects in other youth organizations: Members should not use the same projects, records, leadership activities, etc. for similar awards and recognition in two organizations. For example, members may not show the same animal as both a 4-H member and FFA member. Example: A member can show a steer in FFA and a hog in 4-H if he/she chooses.  
If a project is nominated at the beginning of the year in one program, it should stay in that same program unless the member physically relocates to a new school where the same program is not available.
- It is the family's responsibility to obtain rules and guidelines for any program/activity/event in which they choose to participate to determine eligibility for participation, teams, awards, etc.

### **Use of the 4-H Name and Emblem**

The 4-H Name and Emblem are protected under federal statute (Title 18, U.S.C. 707) which states:

***Whoever, with intent to defraud, wears or displays the sign or emblem of the 4-H clubs, consisting of a green four-leaf clover with stem, and the letter H in white or gold on each leaflet, or any insignia in colorable imitation thereof, for the purpose of inducing the belief that he is a member of, associated with, or an agent or representative for the 4-H clubs; or***

***Whoever, whether an individual, partnership, corporation or association, other than the 4-H clubs and those duly authorized by them (members of Chartered Clubs and certified volunteers), the representatives of the United States Department of Agriculture, the land-grant colleges, and persons authorized by the Secretary of Agriculture, uses, within the United States, such emblem or any sign, insignia, or symbol in colorable imitation thereof, or the words "4-H Club" or "4-H Clubs" or any combination of these or other words or characters in colorable imitation thereof -- shall be fined not more than \$5,000 for individuals and \$10,000 for groups, or imprisoned not more than six months, or both.***

The federal guidelines require all non-4-H groups and individuals who wish to use the 4-H Name and Emblem of to make application to the USDA.

Groups who discriminate against any persons who meet 4-H membership eligibility will be denied use of the 4-H Name and Emblem and will be subject to having that privilege revoked.

### **Official Clover:**



For additional guidelines, see: [4h.okstate.edu/for-educators/4-h-name-emblem/](https://4h.okstate.edu/for-educators/4-h-name-emblem/)

Oklahoma 4-H Website: [4h.okstate.edu](https://4h.okstate.edu)